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DATE: 02-Apr-2009

8 December 1981

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of the House Task Force on American Prisoners and Missing
in Southeast Asia, 8 December 1981

1. On 8 December 1981, Admiral B. R. Inman, DDCI, briefed Members of the House Task Force on American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia on efforts by the Intelligence Community to gather information on POW/MIAs. Admirals E. A. Burkhalter, Deputy Director/DIA, and A. G. Paulson, Assistant Vice-Director for Collection Management/DIA, briefed the Members on recent reportings on POW/MIA sightings. The briefing was held in Room 2218 Rayburn House Office Building from 1030 hours to 1215 hours. The House Sergeant at Arms conducted a technical sweep prior to the briefing. There was no transcript. ☐

2. Members present from the Task Force were: ☐

Robert K. Dornan (R., CA), Chairman
Robert Lagomarsino (R., CA)
John LeBoutillier (R., NY)

Also attended:

William Hendon (R., NC)
W. Henson Moore (R., LA)
Bob Stump (D., AZ)

3. Present from the staff were: ☐

Adrienne Cordova, Representative Dornan's staff
Kathryn Hartnett, Representative Gilman's staff
(both for DIA portion only)

4. Present from the State Department was: ☐

Barbara Harvey, Vietnam Desk (for DIA portion only)

5. Present from DIA were: ☐

Ken Geisen
Lt. Col. John Ferr, ISA
Lt. Col. Jack Kennedy, DIA

6. Present from CIA were: ☐

Admiral Bobby R. Inman, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
J. William Doswell, D/External Affairs Staff
☐ Legislative Liaison

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7. Chairman Dornan began the briefing with a lengthy account of an individual whose information at first seemed reliable. Upon more careful review, however, the Chairman had discredited the information. DIA indicated that they had come to the same conclusion. He then asked Admiral Paulson to give the group an update on any significant information since their last briefing in June 1981. []

8. Admiral Paulson commented on remains of three servicemen returned to the U.S. by Laos last July and explained the message that the Lao intended to convey by their return. He summarized recent interviews which have been conducted with individuals who claim to have sighted caucasians. His conclusion was that in spite of their on-going efforts very little positive information about POW/MIAs has materialized recently. Chairman Dornan asked about the extent to which Private Edward Garwood, USMC, has been debriefed and whether deserters who filter back to the U.S. are questioned about POW/MIAs. (S)

9. Admiral Inman explained how the collection assets are directed toward obtaining information and verification once a possible POW site is located. He gave details on the volume, nature, and capabilities of collection efforts against this target in recent years. He said that there was not much good information but that so-called soldiers of fortune had put forward a great deal of inaccurate information. []

10. There were several related issues discussed during the briefing. Chairman Dornan said he had heard from Ann Mills Griffith and another reliable source that there was a covert search plan that had been disapproved at the highest level in DIA. Admiral Paulson responded to the item. Representative Moore mentioned an individual who had come to him for assistance in getting employment with CIA or DIA so that he could carry out a project. Admiral Inman told him that we were able to document that the individual's story was false. There was a question about whether the Government could act quickly if necessary to launch a search mission and the Members were assured that there are appropriate mechanisms to do so. There were also comments about the [] border areas. In conclusion, Admiral Inman assured the Members that the POW/MIA problem is receiving attention but that there is little reason for optimism. His suggestion that the POW/MIA families be made aware of this was well received by the Members. Chairman Dornan seemed impressed with the lack of optimism expressed by the briefers. []

[]
Legislative Liaison

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